

**CLAIMS**

**1.** A method for use in a router (10) of configuring a routing path to an address in an IP network using a routing control unit (1) separate from the router (10), the method comprising the steps of:

5       - a) the router (10) sending the routing control unit (1) a routing path to said address (21);

      - b) the routing control unit (1) sending the router (10) a validation message (22); and

      - c) configuring the selected routing path in the router (10).

**2.** A method according to claim 1, characterized in that the router (10) selects the routing path sent in step a) as a function of information (20) received by the router and concerning routing to said address.

**3.** A method according to claim 1, characterized in that the routing control unit (1) executes step b) at a time determined as a function of the state of the traffic in the network.

**4.** A method according to claim 1, characterized in that the routing control unit (1) executes step b) after a data stream to be delivered to said address for which resources have been reserved along a path across the network has passed through the router (10).

**5.** A method according to claim 1, characterized in that the routing control unit (1) executes step b) after instigating further reservation of resources along the selected routing path in the network for a data stream to be delivered to said address for which resources have already been reserved along a path across the network.

**6.** A method according to claim 1, characterized in that step c) further comprises the router (10) sending (23) the selected routing path to at least one other router.

**7.** An IP router comprising:

      - means (11) for selecting a routing path to an IP address;

      - means for sending the selected routing path (21) over the network;

      - means for receiving via the network a message (22) validating the selected routing path; and

      - means (13) for configuring the selected routing path in the router on receiving a validation message in respect of said routing path.

**8.** An IP network comprising at least a router (10) and a routing control unit (1) separate from the router, in which network the router and the control unit employ

the method according to any one of claims 1 to 6.

9. An IP network according to claim 8, characterized in that the control unit (1) and the router (10) communicate via the IP network.